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Sixth Report

**COMMUNIST VIOLATIONS OF
THE VIETNAM AND LAOS SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS**

(This report covers the week from
23 March through 29 March 1973)

*This memorandum has been prepared jointly by the
Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense*

NSA review completed

DIA Review Completed.

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The Key Points

- Only a small number of additional civilian and military specialists started the infiltration trip south during the week. There have been no observed infiltration starts of combat troops since 11 March. Infiltrators in the pipeline continued moving south.
- The flow of North Vietnamese military supplies into southern Laos was considerably above the mid-March level, but somewhat below that of late February.
- North Vietnamese logistics units in Quang Tri Province moved very large quantities of supplies during the week.
- The number of combat incidents initiated by the Communists continued at the moderate level of the last several weeks in both South Vietnam and Laos.

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The Details

NOTE: This is the sixth in a series of reports detailing recently received evidence of (a) Communist efforts to infiltrate new manpower and military materiel toward and into South Vietnam, and (b) Communist-instigated combat activity in violation of the Vietnam and Laos settlement agreements.

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A. Infiltration and Redeployments of North Vietnamese Personnel

1. Continuing the trend of the past several weeks, only a small number of new North Vietnamese infiltrators started the trip south during the week, and all of them were civilian and military specialists.

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2. In a Special Note attached to our memorandum of last week, we discussed some very tenuous evidence concerning 6,500 possible NVA infiltrators whom we had not included in our infiltration estimate. We have received no additional evidence of the existence of these infiltrators since last week. After careful study, both the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense have agreed that we should continue to leave these possible infiltrators out of our estimate at the present time. If and when new evidence is obtained, this judgment will be reviewed. Therefore, our total estimate of 35,000 infiltrators (25,000 in the pipeline as of 28 January plus 10,000 who started their journey south since that date) remains unchanged.

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3. Recent evidence on the movement of infiltrators through the pipeline indicates that a significant proportion of the groups which started south since early this year have traveled by vehicle. Previously, when many sections of the Ho Chi Minh trail system were under aerial bombardment, most infiltrators moved on foot.) As a result, many of the personnel in the pipeline have arrived at their destinations appreciably earlier than they would have in former years. Thus, it is estimated that most of the 35,000 North Vietnamese personnel who have been in the infiltration system since 28 January have now arrived at their destination.

4. Recently available evidence indicates that the headquarters and support elements of an NVA Air Defense Division have been located in the Khe Sanh area of northern South Vietnam since just prior to the ceasefire date. This divisional entity is probably the senior authority for North Vietnamese air defense forces in the "southern area" (i.e., Quang Tri Province of South Vietnam, the contiguous areas just north of the DMZ, and the Panhandle of Laos.) At present, approximately 60 percent of North Vietnam's total antiaircraft forces plus two SAM regiments are known to be located in this southern area.

5. As of 27 March, hard evidence has confirmed the presence of all elements (four firing battalions and one support battalion) of the previously reported NVA SAM regiment in the Khe Sanh area. Since 21 March, however, we have received no further information on the SA-2 site near Khe Sanh which was occupied and operational as of that date.

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6. Within southern Laos, the North Vietnamese apparently are effecting a major restructuring of their logistical system. According to a North Vietnamese soldier who recently rallied, all NVA infiltration and logistic stations (Binh Trams) in

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Saravane and Attapeu Provinces of Laos are to be re-formed into regiments, each with a specific function. According to the rallier, at least two Binh Trams in these areas completed their transformation in late 1972 and early 1973. Similar changes have also occurred elsewhere within the NVA logistic and infiltration system. A Binh Tram in Quang Tri Province of South Vietnam, for example, was redesignated as an AAA regiment in early March. In two other cases, infiltration-support regiments appear to have been established from existing Binh Trams or elements of Binh Trams in the Laos Panhandle. The impact of these organizational changes is not yet clear. Significant supply activity continues in the area, however, and it is apparent that with U.S. bombing halted over southern Laos, North Vietnam's manpower requirements to carry out logistic operations are greatly reduced.

B. Movement of Military Equipment and Supplies by the North Vietnamese toward and into South Vietnam and Laos

7. North Vietnamese logistical activity continued at a high level during the week in both southern Laos and northern South Vietnam. Large numbers of cargo vehicles were observed moving through the entry corridors from North Vietnam into the Laos Panhandle, in the central Panhandle, and in the tri-border area to the south. The number of vehicles moving southward through the entry corridors from North Vietnam increased by about one quarter over the previous week. The present flow of traffic is still somewhat less than it was during the peak period in the last half of February, but is considerably higher than it was in mid-March. Heavy vehicle activity was also detected in Quang Tri Province during the week as large quantities of supplies were being moved by NVA logistics units in that area. In the southern part of North Vietnam--where our evidence is more limited--the total traffic volume appeared to be less, but a significant amount of cargo was still being shipped. The movement of supplies to northern Laos from North Vietnam remained at roughly the levels of the past several weeks.

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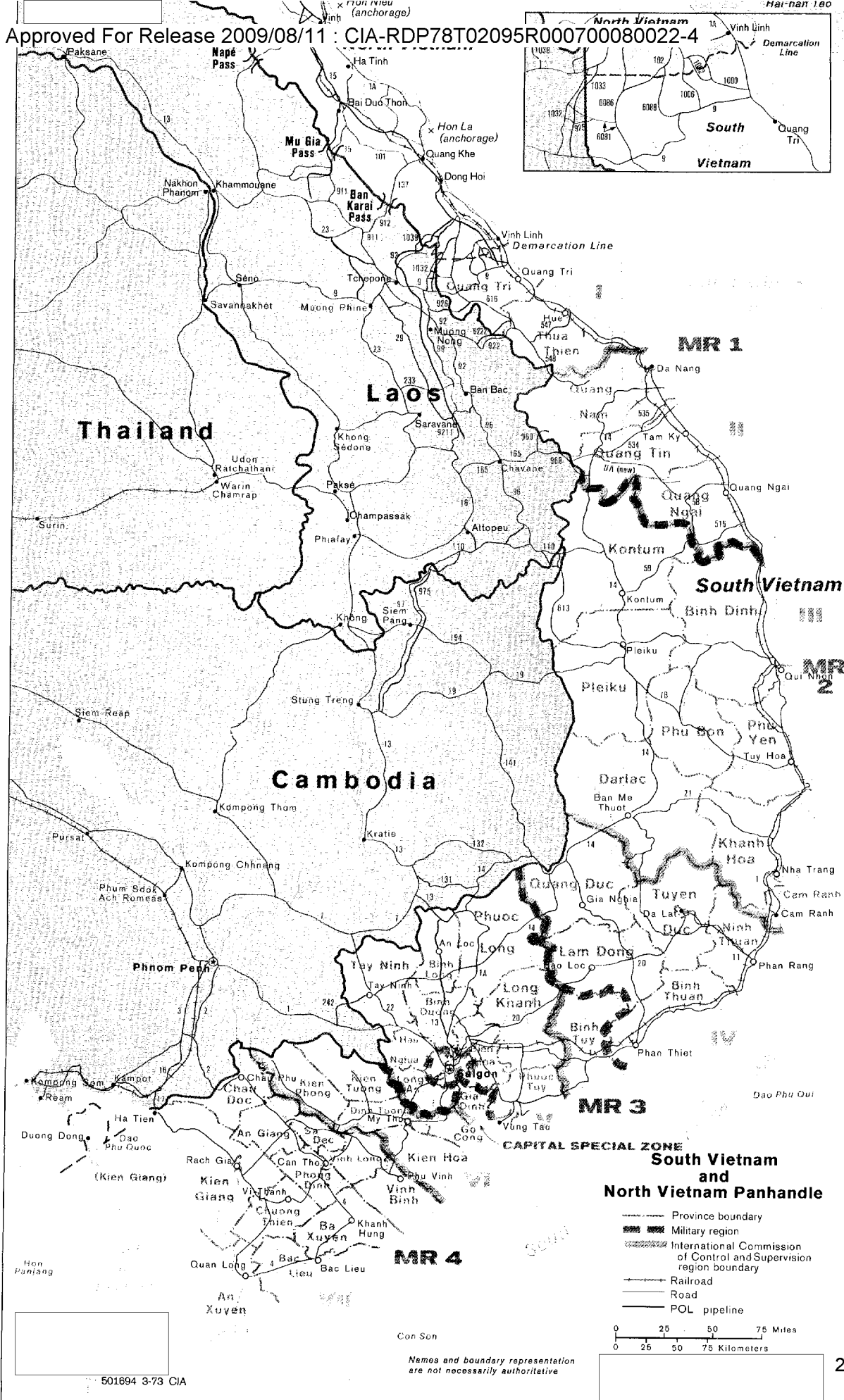
In northern Laos, the North Vietnamese have begun work on road improvements in the northern region of the Plaine des Jarres.

8. The following instances of Communist logistic activity were observed within South Vietnam during the week. Activity observed within South Vietnam probably reflects supplies which have recently entered the country. (The map on the following page shows the roads and route numbers which appear below.)

- (a) Reports from Quang Tri Province indicate that on 20 March one NVA logistic unit received or dispatched 200 vehicles, while another unit received or dispatched 300 vehicles on the same date. No information was available as to the cargo being carried by these vehicles.
- (b) On 21 and 22 March, 1,100 tons of rice and unspecified ordnance were shipped between two logistic units operating in Quang Tri Province.
- (c) On 23 and 25 March, an NVA logistic unit in Quang Tri Province received over 400 tons of assorted types of munitions. It could not be determined whether this materiel had just been shipped from North Vietnam or had been transferred from another location within South Vietnam. On 25 March, the same unit had, in addition, nearly 400 tons of munitions in storage.
- (d) From 23 through 29 March, 89 cargo vehicles were observed moving south on Route 1033 in the western DMZ.

9. The following indications were received during the reporting period of North Vietnamese logistic activity in north and south Laos. Historical

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precedent would suggest that much of the activity in the Laos Panhandle probably involved supplies destined for South Vietnam.

- (a) Hard evidence recently received in Washington indicates that as of 20 March the North Vietnamese were making a substantial effort to upgrade the route system in the northern Plaine des Jarres. Bridge and drainage ditch construction and road grading were observed on Route 7, the primary route into the Plaine from North Vietnam, and also on Routes 4 and 4/7 which transit the northern Plaine in an east-west direction.
- (b) On 22 March, about 200 vehicles were observed moving between NVA logistic entities in the northwest Bolovens region and the area west of Chavane in the Laos Panhandle.
- (c) On 23 March, an NVA logistic unit in the tri-border area had 77 vehicles in operation. In addition, the unit received another 6 cargo vehicles, reportedly carrying carbine ammunition, on the same date.
- (d) During the period 23-29 March, 235 cargo vehicles were detected traveling south on Route 912 through the Ban Karai Pass. There were also 245 northbound vehicles observed moving through the Pass during this period.
- (e) On 24 March, an NVA logistic unit operating near Ban Bac in the Laos Panhandle was observed to have almost 70 cargo vehicles operating in its area, including 23 northbound,

31 southbound and 14 parked vehicles, all of which were on Route 99.

- (f) On 25 March, another NVA logistic unit south of Saravane received 46 cargo vehicles and dispatched another 42.
- (g) On 26 March, 99 cargo vehicles were observed moving southward in the Ban Bac area.
- (h) On 28 March, 70 trucks were observed on Route 966 east of Chavane. This is more than three times the number seen along this route on any one day since the 22 February Laotian ceasefire.

10. The following evidence was received during the week of movement within North Vietnam of military and other supplies which are probably destined for South Vietnam and northern Laos.

- (a) On 21 March, 100 tons of unspecified cargo were detected moving southward from Vinh to an NVA logistic unit on the Song Ca River. This NVA unit is located at a major transshipment point for supplies moving southward through the North Vietnam Panhandle.
- (b) In the southern North Vietnam Panhandle, large amounts of cargo were being transported southward by barge. On 21 March, an NVA logistic unit operating from Dong Hoi to the south shipped 100 tons of rice on a number of barges. On 25 March, the same unit had 45 tons of ammunition and 550 tons of rice awaiting shipment at dockside.
- (c) On 21 March, another logistic unit operating south of Dong Hoi was observed sending 49 vehicles south and 46 north.

- (d) On 23 and 24 March, 127 tons of food-stuffs, 25 tons of gasoline, and 16 tons of ammunition were shipped from a storage area near Vinh to northern Laos via Route 7.
- (e) On 24 March, another 88 tons of cargo were dispatched from the Vinh area to an NVA logistic unit on the border of northern Laos. The cargo included 17 tons of ammunition and 25 tons of foodstuffs, the remainder being unspecified cargo.
- (f) On 27 March, 116 trucks were observed operating along Route 7 near the Plaine des Jarres. This is more than double the number observed on any one day since the Laotian ceasefire of 22 February.

C. Combat Activity Instigated by Communist Forces In South Vietnam Since the Ceasefire

11. In South Vietnam, the total number of Communist-initiated ceasefire violations reported by the South Vietnamese Armed Forces since 28 January and for the last week (23 March - 29 March) are shown below:

| Military Region | Total Since Ceasefire Level of Action | | Last Week (23-29 Mar) Level of Action | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| | Major | Minor | Major | Minor |
| MR 1 | 652 | 2,348 | 34 | 131 |
| MR 2 | 159 | 922 | 19 | 100 |
| MR 3 | 192 | 1,396 | 21 | 89 |
| MR 4 | 300 | 2,842 | 29 | 207 |
| Totals | 1,303 | 7,508 | 103 (125) <u>1/</u> | 527 (642) <u>1/</u> |

1/ Denotes totals of previous week.

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12. Some of these violations may have been initiated by GVN forces rather than Communist forces, and it is impossible in all cases to determine the actual instigator. The table above and the chart on the following page, however, do show fairly accurately the trend in the amount of combat that has occurred in South Vietnam since the ceasefire. The fact that a combat incident occurred at a particular time and place is generally reported accurately by the South Vietnamese, even though the question of who started it may not always be treated in objective fashion. In some cases, the Joint Military Commission (GVN/PRG) also reports violations of the ceasefire.

13. The following is a chronological listing of only the most significant "major" Communist violations of the ceasefire in South Vietnam that were reported by the South Vietnamese Armed Forces during the past week.

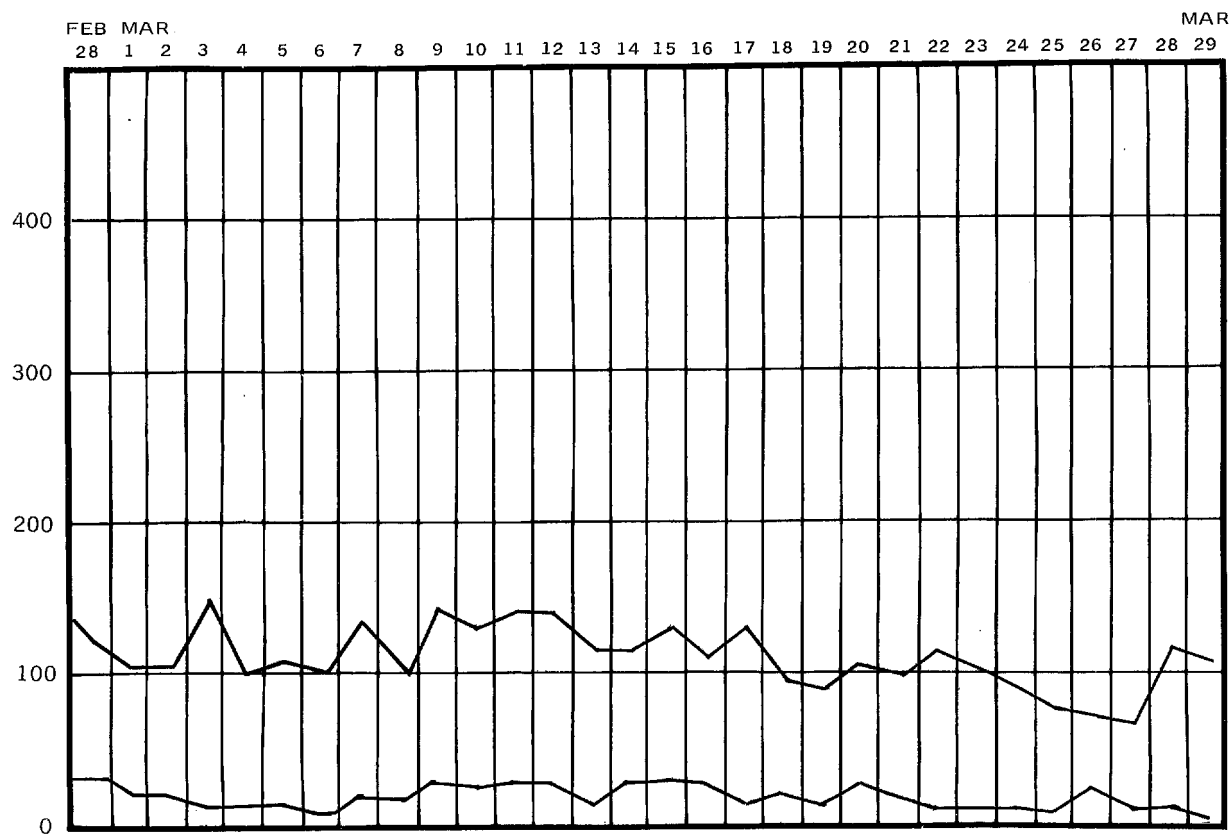
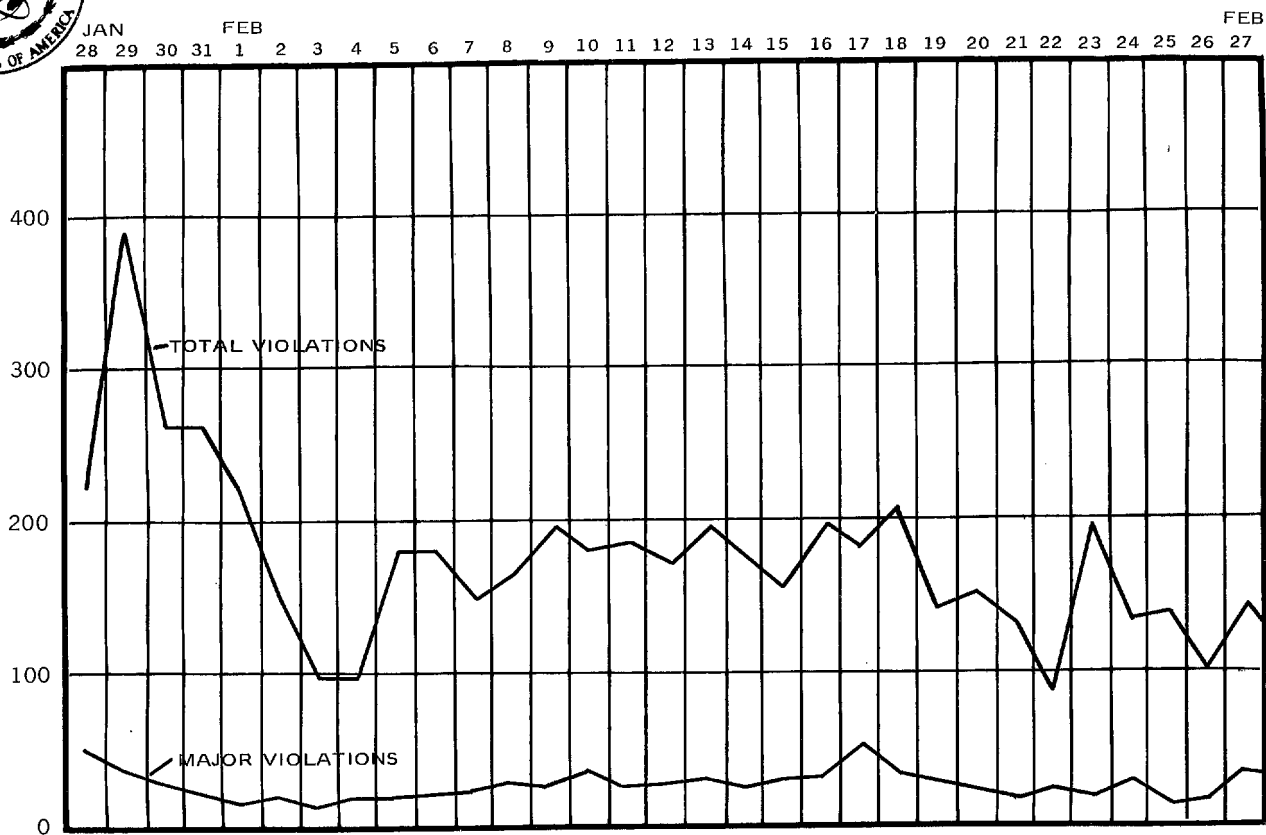
MILITARY REGION 1

- (a) On 23 March, 15 miles south-southwest of Da Nang, a bridge secured by an RF company received a ground attack by an enemy force. One span of the bridge was dropped and the bridge was closed to traffic.
- (b) On 23 and 24 March, enemy forces fired 160 rounds of 60- and 82-mm mortar fire at elements of three ARVN infantry battalions during four separate attacks-by-fire (ABF) 14 miles west of Hue.
- (c) On 24 March, enemy forces fired over 300 rounds of mixed ordnance during six separate ABFs at elements of two ARVN infantry battalions 10 miles west of Hue.
- (d) On 25 March, two VNAF CH-47 helicopters transporting 50 released ARVN PWs

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CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM AS REPORTED BY RVNAF (28 JANUARY 1973 TO THE PRESENT)



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(e) On 25 and 26 March, enemy forces fired a total of 190 60- and 82-mm mortar rounds during three separate ABFs on elements of two ARVN infantry battalions 10 miles west of Hue. One ABF was followed by a ground attack.

(a) On 27 March, enemy forces fired forty-four 122-mm rocket rounds at elements of an ARVN ranger group 8 miles southwest of Pleiku City.

- (a) On 22 and 23 March, RVNAF elements in the vicinity of Tonle Cham received four enemy ABFs consisting of 386 rounds of mixed ordnance.
- (b) On 26 March, enemy forces fired a total of 172 rounds of mixed ordnance during two separate ABFs on the Tonle Cham base camp 9 miles southwest of An Loc ABFs.
- (c) On 27 and 28 March, the Tonle Cham base camp received 175 rounds of mixed ordnance during two ABFs.
- (d) On 29 March, the Tonle Cham base camp received 720 rounds of mixed ordnance.

(a) On 24 March, enemy forces attacked elements of an ARVN infantry battalion 10 miles northeast of Chau Duc.

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- (b) On 25 March, a US Army UH-1H helicopter with standard US markings was hit with ground fire while flying from Saigon to Can Tho.
- (c) On 26 March, enemy forces attacked elements of an ARVN infantry battalion while on a security operation 26 miles northeast of Chau Duc.
- (d) On 27 March, 7 miles northwest of Tri Ton, enemy forces fired fifty-five 82-mm mortar rounds at elements of an ARVN ranger battalion.
- (e) On 29 March, enemy forces fired thirty-five 82-mm mortar rounds at elements of an RF battalion 4 miles south-southwest of Ca Mau.

D. Combat Activity Instigated by Communist Forces in Laos During the Week from 23 through 29 March

14. During the week, combat activity continued in the area southeast of Thakhek in Khammouane Province, some of it initiated by friendly forces but some of it initiated by the North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao. Other incidents were reported in areas northeast of Seno; also in areas east and southeast of Kengkok. In the vicinity of Paksong on the Bolovens Plateau and in the area between Khong Sedone and Saravane north of the Plateau, activity decreased as only three clashes were reported. South of Pakse, FAR units in the Muong Khong area reported several attacks by enemy units. Only isolated incidents were reported throughout the rest of Laos.

15. Following is a brief account of significant combat incidents which occurred between 23 and 29 March and which were clearly initiated by Communist forces in violation of the Laos ceasefire agreement:

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- (a) On 23 March, NVA units clashed with a Royal Lao Army (FAR) company southeast of Thakhek. On the same date, another FAR position in the same area was attacked by an enemy company. Northwest of Khong Sedone, the NVA initiated a company-sized attack against a Lao Neutralist Army (FAN) position on the north side of Route 13 forcing the FAN units to withdraw to the southwest.
- (b) On 24 March, an NVA company supported by 140 rounds of mixed 60- and 82-mm mortar fire attacked a FAR company-sized position, southeast of Thakhek.
- (c) On 25 March, enemy forces attacked and forced FAR units to abandon an outpost position north of the Nam Ou River in an area northeast of Luang Prabang. (This was the only friendly-held position on the north side of the Nam Ou River.) On the same date, enemy units attacked a FAR battalion position southeast of Kengkok. In another incident a FAR position northeast of Seno was attacked by an enemy company.
- (d) On 26 March, south of Pakse, a FAR company-sized unit was attacked by an enemy force of unknown size north of Muong Khong.
- (e) On 27 March, one friendly position southeast of Thakhek was attacked by enemy company-sized units. In other areas, enemy units attacked FAR positions southeast of Kengkok and northeast of Seno. South of

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Pakse, on the same date, a FAR company position was attacked by a company-sized unit just north of Muong Khong.

- (f) On 28 March, enemy units initiated a company-sized attack against a FAR position southeast of Thakhek.

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